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General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

95th plenary meeting
Monday, 11 March 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Botnaru (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/56/780/Add.3)

The Acting President: In the letter contained in document A/56/780/Add.3, which has just been distributed in the General Assembly Hall, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in documents A/56/780 and addenda 1 and 2, Haiti has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda, allocation of items and organization of work

The Acting President: Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2001, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 107 to the Second Committee.

In order for the General Assembly to proceed expeditiously on the item, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 107 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 107?

If there is no objection, we shall now proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 107 (*continued*)

High-level intergovernmental consideration of financing for development

Draft decision (A/56/L.74)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Venezuela.

Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the General Assembly secretariat, and in particular the Office of Legal Affairs, for having organized and planned this meeting, which is of great significance given the fact that we are now on the eve of a conference of vital importance in Monterrey — a conference that will enable us to move ahead in the process of financing for development.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

02-27942 (E)

For decades now, the United Nations has been seeking to define a new international financial architecture, and, thanks to the contributions of the 189 Members — and of Switzerland, which will soon be joining the ranks of the United Nations as an active Member — we have succeeded in producing a consensus-based document that will enable us to achieve a successful outcome in Monterrey, thus fulfilling an important element of the agenda for 2002.

In this context, the delegation of Venezuela submitted, in a proper and timely manner, a draft decision requesting its inclusion — in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77 — in the format of the International Conference on Financing for Development. Given the receptivity of the co-Chairman of the Conference and of representatives from both the North and the South, and in view of the planning that has been done for this historic event, Venezuela now wishes to withdraw draft decision A/56/L.74, so that we can — on the basis of the gentlemen's agreement arrived at over the course of this afternoon and previous days — reach a consensus arrangement on our participation.

Following opening statements, we hope to be in a position that will ensure that — in accordance with previous practice — before lots are drawn, my country, Venezuela, which has the honour of chairing the Group of 77, and Spain, which holds the chairmanship of the European Union, will be able to speak during the debate in Monterrey, and that subsequently — if there is agreement in the plenary — other countries will be able to speak on the basis of the drawing of lots that is to take place.

Clearly, this solution is prompted by an international reality shaped by a presidential diplomacy that has ensured that, during this year alone, there will be plenary participation in six events. There is no doubt that the Millennium Declaration has given rise to a new reality in the context of the Organization.

It is clear that today's decision does not set any kind of a precedent as concerns future events. In this respect, we have agreed with delegations at today's meeting that this decision sets no precedent, but that, in the case of this Monterrey consensus, it will allow us to serve as spokesmen for this North-South dialogue, represented by the Group of 77 and the European Union and by the holding of an event that will allow us — in Mexico, in Latin America and in this hemisphere — to lay the groundwork for an agreement on financing for development.

I should like to reaffirm Venezuela's wish to withdraw this draft decision on behalf of the Group of 77. I wish also to thank each and every delegation for its support and understanding, and to assure them that we will be witnessing a momentous event in the early months of 2002.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Fernandez Trigo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the Ambassador of Venezuela and to thank first of all of those who have made it possible for us to find a solution to address a minor problem, a small obstacle that has arisen in the course of our discussions. I think that, in any case, we have all shown flexibility despite our interest in maintaining our own respective positions.

Therefore, I should like to mention especially the Group of 77 and JUSCANZ — Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand — which have done important work to help us arrive at the compromise just explained by the delegation of Venezuela. It will allow us to go to Monterrey without the bad aftertaste of a vote in which wishes might have been forced for the sake of the majority. This is a much better and much more positive solution for everybody, and we think it is a good basis to resolve this situation. It is a good outcome with respect to the statements at the Monterrey Conference. Moreover, we believe it respects previous solutions reached in similar cases.

We should like to thank everyone — the President of the Assembly, the Co-Chairmen, the Secretariat and all the delegations — for their cooperation. We welcome the fact that the solution reached will allow Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of 77, and Spain, on behalf of the European Union, to speak in first and second place, respectively, before the statements proceed in their turn on the basis of lots.

Mr. Stuart (Australia): I am speaking on behalf of the delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. We regard this agreement on the list of speakers as a pragmatic step taken for the sake of ensuring the smooth running of the important conference at Monterrey, Mexico, next week. Financing for development is a topic of critical

importance to all our delegations, especially those from countries in the process of development.

Our delegations do have some reservations about the decision. We stress that we have agreed to this compromise in the spirit of reaching the necessary consensus on these organizational issues. Our understanding is that this is an arrangement reached for this conference and does not represent a precedent for other United Nations meetings.

Mr. Hirata (Japan): My delegation believes that the order of the list of speakers is a very important procedural issue that should be guided by the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principle of sovereign equality.

However, to avoid further delay in the drawing of lots, we have taken the painful decision not to block the gentlemen's agreement that has been reached. This gentlemen's agreement, however, must apply only to the list of speakers for this conference.

Mr. Isakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation will not object to the proposed plan. At the same time, we feel that such an informal agreement should not create a precedent and serve as a basis to confirm this kind of practice. We cannot allow any action, including those of a procedural nature, to be interpreted as casting doubt on the basic principle of the sovereign equality of Member States of the United Nations.

Mr. Shin Boo-nam (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea would like to join the consensus on the arrangement with regard to the list of speakers for the International Conference on Financing for Development, in which the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, and the European Union will be able to make statements at the first plenary meeting of the summit segment of the Conference.

However, my delegation would like to point out that the arrangement at issue may be inconsistent with the general principle of international conferences, with the defined nature of the Monterrey Conference as an intergovernmental event and with the already agreed modality for the designation of speakers for this Conference, stipulated in the development resolutions and decisions of the United Nations General Assembly. In this regard, we believe that this new arrangement should not constitute a precedent for any organizational work of future intergovernmental conferences or of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that immediately following the adjournment of this meeting, the drawing of lots will take place in this Hall.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 107.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.